

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of allocating predictable costs for consumable items of a laser system, comprising the steps of:

- 5 determining a predicted lifetime of one or more components of a laser system in terms of a countable parameter;
- estimating costs for the repair and/or replacement of the components in advance of their predicted failure; and
- scheduling the costs to be paid at one or more predetermined times.

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2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the countable parameter is selected from the group of parameters consisting of time, pulse count, accumulated input energy to a discharge of the laser system and number of processed workpieces.

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3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of ordering in advance one or more replacement components for the one or more components predicted to fail.

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4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the one or more components includes at least one component from the group consisting of a laser tube, tube windows, a line-narrowing optical component, a line-narrowing module, a monitor optics module, a halogen filter, a pulser module and containers of a laser gas.

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5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the one or more components includes a line-narrowing module.

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6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the costs are estimated to be an amount of the countable parameter multiplied by a cost per unit of the countable parameter.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the countable parameter is selected from the group of parameters consisting of time, pulse count, accumulated energy input to a discharge of the laser system and number of processed workpieces.